A LEXICO-SEMANTIC INTERPRETATION OF EUPHEMISMS IN KIEMBU- (KĨĨVETI DIALECT)

BY

LUCY WANGAI MBAKA

C50/89988/2016

A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN LINGUISTICS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

NOVEMBER, 2020

DECLARATION

I state that this research project is authentic and has not been presented for examination in any other university.

Sign…………………………………………   Date: …………………………………

LUCY WANGAI MBAKA

C50/89988/2016

This project has been submitted for examination with our approval as the candidate's supervisor.

Sign…………………………………………   Date: …………………………………

DR. MWANIKI NDUNGU

DEDICATION

To my dear family:

"Regards for your prayers,

goodwill and encouragement".

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I take this opportunity to sincerely thank and appreciate all who contributed to the success of my project journey in one way or another.

The journey was bumpy but I owe my success to you all.

To God the father Almighty, all Glory and Honor is yours. My strength was drawn from you. I confirm that you never abandon those who faithfully call unto you.

I acknowledge my supervisor Dr. Mwaniki, all the lecturers who taught me and the entire staff in the Department of Linguistics and Languages. Special gratitude goes to Dr. Jane Oduor, Prof. H. Schroeder, the Late Prof. Okoth Okombo, the late Dr. Lillian Kaviti, Dr. Michira, Dr. Mukhwana, Dr. Marete and Dr. Mungania. Your academic support in my course work greatly impacted the success of my study.

Special accolades go to my classmate Edward and the entire class of 2016. I am humbled to have studied with you. We toiled together even when things were quite thick. Your unwavering moral support during the entire course is greatly regarded.

Last but not least, I want to thank my entire family; my late dad who always encouraged me to keep growing my knowledge. To mum, thank you for offering a shoulder to lean on. To my brothers and sisters who relentlessly encouraged me to keep the focus, I say thank you very much.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

This is a study which was conducted on the Kĩĩveti dialect of Kĩembu language. The purpose of this study was to analyze the type of politeness employed in the euphemized Kĩĩveti lexical items in different social contexts. The study was also an analysis of the role played by the euphemized Kĩĩveti dialect lexical items in communicating meanings in different social contexts. The study further sought to establish how social values are expressed in both positive and negative politeness. Data for the study was collected from among the Kĩĩveti dialect speakers who had been picked through purposive sampling. This was then combined with the researcher's knowledge of the language and oral traditions, intuitions, experience and introspection to yield the findings discussed in the various chapters contained herein. The data so collected above was then analyzed using the tenets of the Politeness Theory of Brown and Levinson (1987). The analysis revealed that a Kĩĩveti dialect speaker employs the use of both positive and negative politeness in different social contexts. Euphemized lexical items and expressions in Kĩĩveti dialect were found to perform various functions in communicating meaning in different social contexts including but not limited to the role of genuine communication and the role of disguising. Further, the study showed that a Kĩĩveti dialect speaker expresses social values in a variety of ways in both positive and negative politeness in different social contexts.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Kĩembu is one of the numerous Bantu languages spoken in Kenya. The Aembu people live predominantly in the county of Embu, which was formerly part of the Eastern Province of Kenya. According to the most current national population and housing census of 2019, the Aembu were found to be 608,599. Embu County is recognized as a separate entity from its neighbours; namely the Kikuyu of Kĩrĩnyaga to the west, Ambeere to the south and the Achuka to the east. The Aembu take pride in farming in which they grow crops such as tea, coffee and a host of food crops. They also practice dairy farming unlike their neighbours the Ambeere. Embu town is part of the southern region of the lower part to the south which forms the border between Embu and her neighbour, Mbeere region.

Guthrie (1967) classified the Kĩembu language under zone E, group 50 under the E52 tag. Together in this zone are other Bantu languages such as Ameru, Gĩkuyu, Kĩtharaka and Thagisu. The Ngandorĩ, Ngĩnda and Manyatta are found in the northern region of Embu. Kĩembu speakers according to Njeru (2010) exhibit linguistic variations which have birthed several dialects namely; Kĩĩveti, Kĩruguru and Mbeti. The people of Runyenjes and Kyeni speak the Kĩĩveti dialect whereas those in the northern part of Embu near Irangi forest around Mt. Kenya like Ngĩnda, Ngandorĩ and Manyatta speak the Kĩruguru dialect of Kĩembu language. The Mbeti dialect is spoken in the southern parts regions of Gaturi and lower Embu that borders Mbeere. The three dialects differ significantly both at the phonological level and the lexical inventory. One example will suffice to illustrate the differences in the said dialects. A 'valley' is referred to using different words depending

on the dialect at play. The Kīīveti dialect speakers will refer to a valley as 'ītherero' whereas kīruguru as 'ngurumo'.

The use of euphemisms is more pervasive in many African languages and cultures than in many European languages. The use of euphemism, has a long history spanning over decades. Many scholars have spent considerable resources in terms of money and time to conduct research. Miller (1999) observed that… "given the nature of some concepts deemed too offensive to speak about in almost all the languages, there is need to find a roundabout, indirect and socially acceptable ways of referring to such concepts…" according to him, euphemism sanitizes language. For example, speakers could use positive euphemism for purposes of magnification of reality. This is usually done to elevate one's self- esteem in the eyes of the addressee. Negative euphemism on the other hand deforms or diminishes one's estimation in the eyes of the addressee and the speaker will try to use euphemism to save face. This would include but not limited to expressions such as going to the gents instead of going to the toilet, intercourse instead of sex, insane or mentally ill instead of being mad and so on.

Kĩembu language also has such concepts which interlocutors in the language may find too offensive to talk about without losing face. The speakers use euphemism to refer to such concepts indirectly in a more inoffensive manner. Lim (2012) argues that euphemisms are indeed very common in peoples' daily speeches and that they serve two main functions which are sensitive in reducing the effect of some lexical items in speech deemed to be detrimental that people need to talk about and secondly, they help to level the effect. The proposed study sought to establish the types of politeness employed in the euphemistic Kĩĩveti dialect expressions, establish how meaning is communicated as well as find out

how social values are expressed in different social contexts while employing the Politeness Theory of Brown and Levinson (1987).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Euphemism is essentially a pragmatic concept in nature and it is found in most languages of the world. It is meant to perform certain core social functions such as protecting speakers of a language from certain undesirable emotional arousal among interlocutors. It is an appropriate intervention for upholding self- respect while maintaining difference to others' face. However, euphemism is a social-cultural phenomenon since the society decides which items are to be euphemized and which one should not. Mayfield (2009) observes that euphemism sanitizes and camouflages words and phrases that interlocutors consider unfriendly depending on their societal norms.

It is against this background that the proposed study will try to investigate the use of euphemism both as a tool for communication of meanings and as a politeness strategy to save face in different social settings as constrained by the social norms and standards. Farb (1973: 91) opines that any word is an innocent collection of sounds until a community assigns to it some connotations and then decrees that it cannot be used in certain speech act situations. It is therefore important that more studies are done in various African languages as well as dialects to see how euphemism is manipulated by any one given society to communicate cultural wisdom and philosophy. This will contribute to the scholarly discourse on euphemism especially as a tool for communicating meaning and a convenient tool for politeness.

The proposed study will investigate which types of politeness are used for the euphemistic Kĩĩveti expressions and euphemistic language use. The study will further try to find out how social values are expressed in the euphemistic Kĩĩveti expressions as well as establish how meaning is communicated in the euphemistic expressions in Kĩĩveti dialect of the Kĩembu language in different social contexts. This will be done using politeness theory of Brown and Levinson (1987) thus contributing to the literature of Kĩembu.

1.3 Research Questions

i. What type of politeness is employed in the euphemized lexical items in Kĩĩveti dialect in different social contexts?

ii. How does the use of euphemism contribute to the communication of meaning in the Kĩĩveti dialect of Kĩembu language?

iii. How are social values expressed in both positive and negative politeness?

1.4 Objectives

1.4.1 General Objectives

The proposed study will look into the type of politeness employed in the euphemized lexical items in Kĩĩveti dialect and assess the role played by the euphemized lexical items in conveying meanings between interlocutors in different social contexts.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

i. To identify the type of politeness employed in the euphemized lexical items in Kĩĩveti dialect in different social contexts.

ii. To determine the role played by the euphemized lexical items in Kĩĩveti dialect in communicating meanings between interlocutors in a variety of social contexts.

iii.   To establish how social values are expressed in both positive and negative politeness in Kĩĩveti dialect.

1.5 Justification

Hymes (1972) as was quoted by Al- Tayib Umari (2006) makes an important assertion concerning communication. He says that so as to realize the communication intentions or aims language must learn on how to speak both accurately as well as appropriately. Speaking appropriately entails speaking the "use of politeness strategies" acceptable in a speech community. Brown and Levinson (1987) proposed the politeness theory which lays a framework upon which we assess whether speakers have met the threshold of speaking appropriately as earlier envisaged by Hymes (1972).

In this regard studies have been done to investigate how speakers and addressees arrive at appropriateness in their interactions. One such strategy employed is the use of euphemism, which according to Sadock (1993) is the replacement of a word or phrase which due to its nature should not be spoken aloud with another which is considered less offensive. Some topics or things are considered socially unacceptable, which in most cases are referred to as taboo. Most African languages have such words or things and Ki- Embu is no exceptional. The proposed study which is a 'Lexico-Semantic Interpretation of Euphemism in Kĩĩveti dialect will investigate the "politeness strategies" employed by those who speak a given language. The proposed study will contribute to scholarly discourse on language etiquette and politeness whereas other researchers in the same field both in Kĩembu and other neighboring languages will use the work as a spring board upon which to firm their studies.

1.6 Scope and Limitation

The proposed study will limit itself to a lexical- semantic interpretation of euphemisms in Kĩĩveti dialect under the politeness theoretical framework as proposed by Brown and Levinson of (1987). The theory holds that people use politeness as a means of strategy to save face. To the "face" is the perceived public estimation of a person in the eyes of others in the society. Every member in a community has the responsibility to protect this face. They say that one of the strategies used by speakers and hearers is the use of politeness. The duo says that "there are two types of politeness namely positive politeness and negative politeness." The proposed study will be on the Kĩĩveti dialect of Kĩembu language. The researcher shall collect about 60 euphemisms and analyze them through the lens of Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness of (1987).

1.7 Definition of Terms

Euphemisms: words or expressions used to talk about taboo or sensitive subjects indirectly; it is the language of evasion.

Politeness: "How languages express the social distance between the speaker and the hearer and various role relationships." (Brown and Levinson 1987)

Positive politeness: Entails the hearer's desire to be approved of by others in interactions.

Negative politeness: The desire by a participant in an interaction not to be imposed on or to be impeded in his activities.

Face: Something that is emotionally invested or one's public self- esteem. This face may get diminished, enhanced or maintained.

Pragmatics: A subfield of linguistics which refers to the use of language in context. It includes different concepts such as the speech act theory, conversational implicatures and interactions.

1.8 Literature Review

In preparation for the proposed study, this study has looked at different sources. This section serves as a benchmark between this proposed study and the studies done by other scholars elsewhere either on the same subject or a related field of study. Furthermore, the section serves to identify gaps in previous works and trying to fill such said gaps if any. Guthrie (1970), Heine and Mohling (1980) both did a classification of Bantu languages. In their separate works, they both classify Kĩembu under zone E of group 50 under tag 52. Gitonga (2000) did a study on Kĩembu where he showed how communication intentions among speakers keep mutating given that time and context vary. Gitonga's work which contained some Kiswahili as well as Ki- Embu words lays a good foundation for the proposed study since in the study, he has shown how communication intentions keep changing over time and as a result of change of context.

Chesaina (1997) points out that Embu and Mbeere have for a long time been wrongly taken as a 'primitive dialect' of Gikuyu language, probably owing to numerical superiority of the Gikuyu speech community and dominance. His work tries to set the record straight. The proposed study has also indicated in the background that Kĩembu is a distinct speech community. Mwaniki (1973) has written extensively on the culture and history of the Aembu as a people. His work provided a very good historical and cultural information to this study.

Qadi (2009) defines the term 'euphemism as sounding good, words that sound nice or good. He reasons that euphemism is the substitution of those words that are deemed offensive with other words which in the eyes of the culture at play, are friendly or less offensive. For example, in his research he says the English speakers for instance use the expression senior citizen for old people. The expression senior citizen is considered polite in the English culture as opposed to just calling them old people. Qadi (2009) made the conclusions when he carried out an investigation entitled 'A Sociolinguistics Comparison of Euphemisms in English and Arabic'. In this work, Qadi says "that euphemisms are divided into two namely positive and negative politeness". 'Positive politeness' is employed when considering the general norms of a society and in so doing expressing solidarity with the addressee. He says that euphemisms are exhibited in the English speech community by the use of 'fancy occupational titles. In this Qadi gives the example of 'environmental engineers instead of garbage collectors. He goes on to say that in Arabic, euphemism is made use of to a great extent. In comparing Arabic with English in the aforementioned title. According to Qadi, Arabic too makes use of positive euphemisms.

Negative euphemisms on the other hand are widely made use of to avert face loss. This is achieved by erasing all things that interlocutors are not very comfortable to deal with directly. Qadi (2009) confirmed that in Arabic, it appeared that people made use of negative euphemism just like their English counterparts. In both languages for example, poverty is euphemized albeit with different names. In Arabic and English, the phenomenon of poverty is euphemized as 'low income'.

Nguti (2013) while doing a comparative study between Ki-Kamba and Kiswahili, has looked into how the languages euphemize offensive things or speech acts in them particularly in the home place. Stockwell (2008) asserts that every society works hard to inculcate morals as well as societal norms in the speakers of that language especially in the home place. The work shows that euphemisms are a crucial aspect or component of communication in any language, particularly in the home where socialization of the younger members of a society begins before they are released into the wider world. This proposed research will try to draw some parallels with the work of Nguti in more ways in the coming chapters.

Mboya (2002) explored a descriptive study of the customs of the Oromo people of Ethiopia especially the culture where the speakers of the language avoid expressly calling names of close relatives especially those they are related with by way of marriage. The study proved that it was linguistically taboo to refer to close relatives such as husbands, wives, in- laws and so on by their names. Mboya (2002) points out that the names are substituted with coined names as a means of expressing respect to such close relatives. He notes that in most African societies, elders are often addressed using euphemisms as a sign of respect and goes ahead to explore the strategies employed in forming the euphemisms to substitute the 'offensive' ones.

Munyiri (2006) researched on the relationship between language and gender in the Gi-Kabete dialect of Gikuyu language. She investigated the extent to which lexical items associated with a particular gender contribute towards the suppression of that particular gender. Simon (2007) in his study on "the pragmatic analysis of Gikuyu lexical euphemisms in HIV/AIDS discourse," submits that due to the wide spread use of

euphemisms in HIV/AIDS discourse, some people are unable to understand the intended meaning hence communication breakdown. She concludes that euphemisms are not sufficient in conveying meaning and that at times, there is distortion of the intended meaning.

Scollon and Scollon (1997) and Brown and Levinson (1987) have inflamed the discussion on politeness with renewed energy. They have provided a working definition of politeness which has come to be widely used by scholars and which to a large extent will be adopted by this proposed study. In their definition, they say that "politeness means the way in which languages express the social distance between speakers and the different roles they play in the relationship." Richards and Schmidts (2002:405) say that "politeness in English is often personified by someone who is polite, has good manners and behaves well." In most works looked at by this study, politeness is conceptualized as a mechanism of avoiding conflict between the speaker and the hearer and as a means of ensuring cooperation when two people have a conversation between them. Fraser (1990) suggests about four different ways of conceptualizing 'politeness'. These ways include "the social norm view, the conversational- maxim view, the face-saving view and the conversational contract view."

Concerning the social norm view, Fraser (1990) says that "politeness is conveyed in different ways, both verbal and non- verbal". The 'social norm- view' has set social standards or norms which act as the yard stick for measuring politeness. The view assumes that people have to obey the social norms or set standards which are culture specific to express politeness when communicating. Watts (2003) points out that politeness arises when communication is done in line with the social norms. Any deviation from the social norm is seen to contravene the politeness code of the society in question. This is true since

every utterance is placed within a social context to which it is subject to. On the conversational maxim view of Fraser (1990) which as it were is based on the Grice's work (1975), he claims that interactants are focused on their need to communicate meanings. In other words, the conversational maxim view is modeled along the same parameters as the cooperative principle of Grice (CP).

The face-saving view so proposed by Fraser (1990) implies that participants in an interaction have emotions and reputation to protect hence the need to be polite by use of euphemisms. Face in this context is defined as something which is emotionally invested in individuals. Fraser says that face can be lost, enhanced or maintained depending on the proper use of politeness strategies by the interlocutors. Brown and Levinson used Fraser's ideas to build their theory which the proposed study will be using as its theoretical framework. Fraser (1990) claims that some speech acts are a threat to face. He therefore concludes that the speaker and the addressee should use politeness strategies especially when the items in question are potentially face threatening such as taboo words and things.

Brown and Levinson (1987) define face threatening acts (FTAs) using two-yard sticks namely; whose face is threatened and the type of face at risk of the threat. They proposed… "two types of politeness which are positive politeness and negative politeness." The proposed study will to a large extent make use of the two tenets or types of politeness as proposed by the two. Brown and Levinson (1987) say that the fact that politeness is part and parcel of language competency, should not be overlooked and refer to what Hymes referred to as communication competency of language speakers. The idea of politeness governs human communication behavior and directs them on what is acceptable in the social norm setting.

Leech (2005) proposed a theory upon which human communication is to be viewed. He says that the speaker and the addressee have specific set goals which they are striving to achieve in any communication scenario. Whereas the speaker has his illocutionary acts or goals that he strives to convey to the addressee, that is being truthful, polite and relevant, the addressee has also his own illocutionary domain of interpreting the speaker meaning so that in the end communication is seen to have taken place.

1.9 Theoretical Framework

It is an acknowledged fact that speakers in any given situation would desire to appear polite and express themselves appropriately. Hymes (1972) observes that interlocutors need to observe communicative competence. That is to say that they need to learn how to communicate accurately and appropriately. The study in question will employ 'Politeness Theory proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987).' Politeness has over the years, become a very interesting field of research. Several attempts have been made to explain the phenomenon of politeness in a structured manner. Scollon and Scollon (1995) have provided a working definition for the term politeness as "…how languages express the social distance between speakers and their different role relationship…"

Fraser (1990) proposes four major different kinds of seeing politeness; "the social- norm view, the conversational maxim view, the face-saving view and the conversational contract view." 'The social- norm view' looks at the whole phenomenon of politeness from the standards in a social setting. Watts (2003) says that every speech community has its own agreed language etiquette or standards with explicit guidelines and recommendations as to how interlocutors are to conduct their conversation. It therefore goes that every utterance is influenced and guided by social context. The conversation maxim on the other hand is

premised on Grice's work particularly the 'cooperative principle' (CP) whereas the face-saving view of politeness is essentially founded on the emotional concerns of an individual and the want to preserve the social distance.

The face theory proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987) will be used by this proposed study to look into euphemism in Kĩembu language. The theory consists of three main tenets which will also be crucial to the proposed study. The three include: "face, face threatening acts (FTAs) and politeness strategies". Brown and Levinson (1987:61) say that "face is the public self- image that every member wants to claim for himself". They further say that this comprises of two desires where one is negative face and the other one is positive face.

The negative face desire is the claim to one's territories, personal liberties, freedom to action and so on. The positive face is that urge to one's self- image to be acknowledged by those that he interacts with. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), 'the negative face' deflates or diminishes one's social status due to the mention of some taboo subject to the addressee. For example, speakers tend to be defensive of their events or actions where they would look for some indirect way to refer to such. Speakers often euphemize things like going to the toilet, sex, death, war and so on. In reference one would talk of going to the gents or wash rooms, intercourse, passing on and conflict respectively. It is important to note at this juncture that Brown and Levinson (1987:62) point out that every utterance is as it were a potential threat to face hence a 'face threatening act'.

'The positive face' desire has it that when we make an utterance which we believe is offensive or face threatening to the hearer, then we would very much desire to reduce that threat. The speaker does this by reducing the distance between himself and the hearer. This

is done to elevate the social status of both interlocutors. This would include things such as, disagreements which are 'face threatening acts' according to Brown and Levinson (1987). Even in these disagreements one would want to save face. Saving face in this case will then depend on the weightiness or seriousness of the face threatening acts in question. Weightiness is an evaluation, with the social norms in mind and societal values, the impact or situation that may arise from an utterance. This again is calculated on the social norms or values of the community where both interlocutors are members. In assessing the weightiness, the speaker has to bear in mind some variables such as "the degree of imposition, the relative power of the hearer and the social distance between them" (Brown and Levinson, 1987).

"On the degree of imposition," Brown and Levinson (1987) are of the view that the speaker evaluates the degree of imposition that is related with the face threatening act (FTA). According to the two, face threatening acts are any speech acts which are deemed to be threats to both the negative and positive face. I shall talk more about face threatening acts in a while. They define it as "a culturally and emotionally defined ranking of impositions by the degree to which they are considered to interfere with an agent's wants of self-determination or of approval" (p.77). In assessing "the social distance between them," the communicators have both the responsibility of looking into the symmetric social dimension between them. In these cases, they look into things like whether the speech act stands for the purpose of the good of the interlocutors. Brown and Levinson (1987) point out that this is done in the background of social distance between the interlocutors.

On the strength of the foregoing assumptions, Brown and Levinson (1987) say that there are three strategies employed by speakers participating in conversation. "These include positive politeness, negative politeness and off- record politeness." 'Positive politeness' enhances the hearer's positive face. The negative politeness on the other hand aims at preventing the encroachment on the hearer's personal freedom of action. The other strategy of off- record feeds on Grice's 'cooperative principle' and that the hearer is able to deduce intended meaning.

Since human language is designed for face to face interaction, Brown and Levinson (1987) suggests that the issue of 'face' is something that is universal, however they are quick to add that any one given society subjects face to its own cultural beliefs and norms. The implied meaning of this assertion is that euphemism is both a universal phenomenon as well as a culture specific phenomenon. People within a given culture or speech community decide which things and speech acts to euphemize bearing in mind the social- norm tenet. They also say that face can be lost or enhanced and as such interlocutors have to constantly attend to it during an interaction. Further, Brown and Levinson (1987) say that speakers calculate the gravity of their utterances based on three parameters namely; "the perceived power distance, the perceived social distance between the speaker and the hearer and the cultural ranking of the speech act."

Face threatening acts (FTA) are those speech acts which may be threatening to both negative face and positive face. Brown and Levinson (1987) say that these acts may threaten the negative face of the addressee if they are orders, warnings, requests or even suggestions. On the other hand, if the speech acts include such things as disapproval, contradiction, and criticisms, then they constitute positive face threatening acts. Brown and

Levinson call these FTA strategies and they arrange them into a hierarchy depending on the level in which they threaten the addressee's face. They go on to say that the most threatening are those acts which are performed bald on record (non-euphemized things or speech acts). They contrast this with the least face threatening strategy which entails the performing the act off record (euphemizing those speech acts deemed potentially offensive).

Positive politeness strategies forge for unity or solidarity between the speaker and the addressee. Negative politeness strategies on the other hand are those which emphasize on the social distance between the speaker and the addressee by way of accentuating the hearer's liberties from intrusion. Brown and Levinson continue to say that the negative politeness strategies are, as compared to the positive politeness strategies, far less threatening. This is due to the fact that positive politeness strategies are founded on the relational closeness between the speaker and the addressee. There no clear-cut line between the 'positive politeness strategies' in the one hand and the 'negative politeness strategies'. Brown and Levinson say that there is an overlap between these extremes. This is because some FTAs threaten both the positive and negative politeness strategies.

1.10 Methodology

1.10.1 Data Collection

The study proposes to use purposive sampling to collect euphemistic expressions from among the Kĩĩveti speakers of the Runyenjes region. The study will purposely select 10 informants (5 women and 5 men- to ensure equal gender representation) to be interviewed by the researcher, who is a native speaker as well. The ten informants will be 50 years and above who are believed to be fluent in Kĩembu language and accustomed to the language

etiquette of the speech community as well as the cultural norms. Each group will be asked to give 30 euphemized lexical items from different social contexts like birth, circumcision, marriage, death and the activities thereof. The informants will be picked from rural Runyenjes region since the researcher believes that the Kĩembu spoken here has not been adulterated by Sheng. The responses will be recorded in a form to be developed by the researcher and studied keenly to establish trends.

1.10.2 Data Analysis

The proposed study intends to use a qualitative research analysis where the researcher will carry out a textual in- depth analysis of the 60 collected euphemisms from the informants. This research will benefit from both primary data from the informants as well as from secondary sources from the literature review. The researcher will then use her intuitions and knowledge of the dialect to classify the euphemized items into those that fall under positive politeness and those that fall under negative politeness. From the informants' responses, the researcher will be able to establish the change in reality and feelings if any on the strength of the euphemized items and the societal values expressed. The data will be analyzed under the politeness theory of Brown and Levinson (1987). The theory has proposed both positive and negative politeness which the study relied on to investigate which type is employed in the euphemistic Kĩĩveti expressions. The tenets of the theory guided the inquiry all through such as the concept of 'Face', 'Face Threatening Acts' (FTA's) and so on.

1.11 Conclusion

This chapter is a proposal and forerunner of the proposed study of a Lexico- semantic interpretation of euphemism in Kĩĩveti dialect. The chapter begins with a background where key issues about the language under consideration were discussed in great detail. It gives an account of Kĩĩveti dialect of Kĩembu language and the topic under focus-euphemism. The chapter has the statement of the problem which was candidly stated, the objectives, the justification, scope, literature review and theoretical framework among other important parts that were discussed in this section. The research design to be employed by the study was also explained systematically. It is hoped that once this study is completed, it will go a long way to provide useful insights to the speakers of the language under review as well other interested people who would want to carry out further research either in the same area or any other related areas.

CHAPTER TWO

TYPES OF POLITENESS IN DIFFERENT CONTEXTS

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the study will look at the type of politeness employed in the euphemized lexical items in the Kĩĩveti dialect of the Kĩembu language. Scollon and Scollon (1995) define politeness as the way languages express the social distance between interlocutors as well as their different roles in the said relationship. Fraser (1990) posited four main types of politeness which the chapter will look into and see if they apply in the use of euphemism in Kĩĩveti dialect. These four include the social norm view, the conversational maxim view, the face-saving view and the conversational contract view. The chapter explores all the four with a view of trying to see which one is applicable in the Kĩĩveti dialect of the Kĩembu language. Brown and Levinson (1987) further propose three main tenets of the Face Theory. These too include the face itself, the face threatening acts (FTAs) and politeness. This chapter gives prominence to the tenet of politeness as was proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987)

In a conversation, people strive to be clear as well as polite. Lakoff (1987) says that whenever a speaker and hearer interact during a conversation, they both aim at achieving clarity and politeness. However, it is not always easy to achieve both clarity and politeness at the same time. When this is not practically possible, then politeness overrides the need for clarity for the simple reason that people interact in conversations to build relationships amongst themselves. Observance of politeness will help the speaker and his listener to create a rapport and by extension, build a good relationship between them. This is so in the Kĩĩveti dialect of Kĩembu where the speakers of the dialect are further constrained by the

cultural norms to observe politeness during a conversation. Languages and different cultures offer humble opportunities for interlocutors to achieve politeness in their interactions.

Brown and Levinson (1987) hold that mutual cooperation between the speaker and the hearer is the assumption upon which politeness as a strategy is founded. Brown and Levinson (1987) continue that the cooperation between interlocutors is as a motivation from the desire to evade conflict. They claim that politeness is aimed at saving 'face' which they defined as one's self- esteem or as the public image which an individual wish to claim for self. It is something that every individual strives to protect and safe guard during interactions with others. The others too have their own 'face' which they too wish to protect and safe guard.

2.2 Negative Politeness

Negative politeness is widely used to avert face loss. This is achieved by erasing all things and utterances that are not comfortable to deal with directly. Qadi (2009) says that lexical items and expressions that are deemed potentially offensive or taboo are erased or completely avoided. Such words may continue to exist in the language in question but they are rarely or never used in day to day interactions. Brown and Levinson (1987) claim that the fact that politeness is an essential component of human communication, it thus becomes one of the linguistic competencies that one acquires during the process of language acquisition. The negative face desire is the claim to one's territories, personal liberties, freedom to action and so on. Negative politeness according to Brown and Levinson (1987), deflates or diminishes one's social standing or status due to the mention of some taboo words or subject to the addressee. Speakers therefore would often look for some indirect

way to refer to something that is offensive in nature. In this subsection, this study attempts to find out whether the Kĩĩveti dialect speakers do actually employ the use of negative politeness in the daily communication interactions in varied social contexts.

2.3 Sexuality and Child Bearing

Child bearing and by extension sexuality was and still is one of the most revered subjects in most African communities. In spite of being a very crucial biological process for the continuity of life, the subject is often shrouded in mystery. According to Pinker (ibid), a number of reasons have been advanced to account for the tabooing of sex as whole. These reasons, according to Pinker (ibid) may include the fact that during sex, it is possible that one of the partners may not have had fun, a child may have been conceived, an infection passed on or worse still, there could be another sexual partner somewhere who might be enraged if he gets to know about the sexual act between the one he is interested in with another person. Pinker (ibid) also claims that there is a difference in attitude towards sex between males and females. Due to this difference in attitude, the study found out that men in Kĩĩveti dialect use taboo words more than their female counterparts. This is attributed to attitude and the nature of the role they play during sex. Most of the euphemized sex lexical items collected were supplied by the female respondents who appeared not too comfortable when the tabooed words were mentioned.

Qadi (2009) claims that politeness can be broadly classified into positive and negative politeness. Positive politeness according to Qadi (2009), employs the consideration of social norms whilst maintaining the rapport with the hearer. Negative euphemism in the other hand, according to Qadi (2009), entails the avoidance to lose face by avoiding or erasing those linguistic expressions that are deemed pejorative or offensive. The Kĩĩveti

dialect on which this study was conducted was found to employ both positive and negative but in different measures. To a large extent, the speakers of Kĩĩveti dialect use the negative politeness where the taboo word is avoided. For example, 'kũthicana' meaning to have sex, is a taboo word. It is hardly used in any social context meaning that the speakers of Kĩĩveti dialect have employed negative euphemism. The speakers instead use its   euphemized counterparts such as the following:

gwĩkana (to do one another),

kũrũthana (to do one another)

kwĩgũcana (have a common understanding)

kũrora mwatũ (to check on the beehive)

gũkũnya mbakĩ (to pinch tobacco)

kũrĩcana (to eat one another)

kũrĩma mũgũnda (to dig farm)

kũrũmania (to give each other)

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), speakers avoid an offensive word like 'kũthicana' to evade the FTAs or the 'Face Threatening Acts' which can be detrimental to the hearer's self- esteem. They point out that every utterance has the potential of threatening face if not mitigated by way of employing euphemism. Sex is such an emotive subject that is likely to trigger face threatening acts if it is not well euphemized. The negative politeness so employed in the euphemizing sex aims at preventing the

encroachment on the hearer's personal freedoms of action according to Brown and Levinson (1987). They further observe that in as much as face is a universal phenomenon, every society subjects it to its own set norms and cultural beliefs. This was evident from the respondents who kept saying that it is wrong or improper for one to use the taboo word 'kūthicana' in polite society. Lakoff (1973) points out that politeness is an overriding factor when it comes to communication. This is why, according to the findings of this study, Kīīveti speakers euphemize, sex to achieve politeness.

After copulation, the female sexual partner may conceive if the conditions for conception were favorable. Kīīveti dialect speakers have a lexicon to refer to this natural phenomenon. To conceive in the dialect is called 'gwīkīrwa īvu' (to be put pregnancy). This expression is considered taboo according to the informants and the researcher's own intuitions given that she is a native speaker of the dialect. It was found that the dialect speakers prefer to use 'kūgwatia' (to conceive) and 'kūgīa īvu' (to become pregnant) which they consider more polite. The study established that the expression 'ai na īvu' (she is pregnant) is considered offensive and it is rarely used in communication when one is in polite company. The participants informed the researcher that the dialect speakers prefer to use the euphemized expressions such as; 'nī mūrito' (she is heavy) and 'nī mūkuu' (she has carried). The study found out that the kind of politeness that is employed in referring to the processes of conception is negative politeness since the speakers evade using the tabooed lexical item completely and instead uses those that are deemed polite.

During child birth, the study found out that negative politeness is used especially by the relatives and family or society. This was in contrast to the claim by a study done in Gikabete dialect where it was found out that at the labour wards in hospital, the nurses and midwives

employ the bald- on record strategy. It was established from the respondents that the taboo word for the act of giving birth 'gūciara' (give birth) is rarely mentioned or used. On the contrary, its euphemized equivalents are used such as:

kūgīa mwana (to bear a child)

Kūvewa mwana (to be given a baby)

Gūtetheka (to be aided/ helped)

Kūrathimwa (to be blessed).

In the same vein, it was also found out that the Kīīveti speakers employ negative politeness to euphemize the after birth. The taboo word for the after birth in the Kīīveti dialect is 'thigiri' (placenta). The respondents revealed to the study that the placenta is referred to as 'nyomba ya mwana' (baby's house). According to the respondents and the researcher's own intuitions and knowledge of the language, the taboo word '*thigiri*' sounds offensive in light of the cultural norms and thus it is face threatening to the hearer if mentioned. Brown and Levinson (1987) say that speakers would employ negative politeness of avoiding taboo words that may be face threatening acts to the hearer. This is what the study found out to be the case in the Kīīveti dialect of Ki- Embu language.

While still in the social domain or context of sex, it is important to note that the human sexual organs are never expressly mentioned by their names in the Kīīveti dialect. The respondents were uneasy to employ the bald on record strategy of politeness when mentioning these body parts. Instead, they chose to evade them and opted for their euphemized equivalents. For instance, the male reproductive organ; *mūthino* (penis) is

euphemized as *'mūtī'* which means a tree or stick. Similarly, the term 'ndumbi' (eggs) is used in place of 'ntheke' to refer to testicles. The study concluded that this is a case of negative politeness since the taboo words '*mūthino/ ntheke'* are rarely mentioned in public. This is in line with Qadi (2009) who claims that negative politeness avoids losing face by erasing or avoiding those linguistic expressions which are deemed to be pejorative. In light of the Aembu cultural norms, the mention of such body parts may lead to face threatening acts to the hearer and cause conflict. The female reproductive organs are also euphemized and never mentioned expressly. The female reproductive organ, the vagina for instance whose taboo word is 'nvīni' is referred to as 'nyamū'(animal) and the taboo word kang'ura (clitoris) is replaced with 'mboco' (bean), the buttocks whose taboo word is 'matina' is euphemized as 'nthūnu' (buttocks) which is considered more polite and less face threatening to the hearer.

2.4 Body Effluvia

Watts (2003) says that politeness arises when communication is done within the social cultural norms. The human body secretions such as stool, urine and so on are never mentioned by their names in public or in polite company. The study established that the speakers of Kĩĩveti dialect never or rarely mention these body secretions by their names. It was concluded that this too is a case of negative politeness as the speaker evades using the offensive term which might make him appear to be encroaching on the personal freedoms of the hearer. The Kĩĩveti dialect speakers have the word 'kĩoro' (toilet) which they consider offensive and as such, it is rarely or never mentioned in polite company or in public. The speakers of this dialect prefer to use the euphemized version 'nyomba ya

gwitethia' (house to help oneself), 'nyomba ya vata' (house of need) 'nyomba ya mūndu ūmwe' (house of one person).

Brown and Levinson (1987) referred to this kind of politeness in which the speaker restrains himself from using a taboo expression to safeguard the addressee's face needs as negative politeness. The biological processes of excretion were also found to evoke emotions that threatened the face needs of the hearer among the Kīīveti dialect speakers. For instance, the Kīīveti dialect lexical item for long call is 'kūmĩa' (defecate). The study found out that the word is avoided as much as possible and its euphemisms used which included the following expressions as supplied by the informants:

Gwītethia (to help oneself)

Kīoro kīnene (long call)

Kuna mwīgua (to cut a thorn)

Kūuna (to cut it)

Kavida (long call)

The same case applied to short call which the study established that the word for it is 'kumaga' (to urinate). It was found out that this word or expression is never used as it were in polite company. The euphemized equivalents were preferred by the respondents. It was found that one would talk of 'kūthuguma' (to urinate),

 kūmatua (to spit)

gūtua mata (to spit saliva). It is important to note here that urine in Kīīveti dialect is euphemized as saliva in this expression.

Kūrūgama (to stand) again it is worth noting that this euphemism is only used for men who are able to urinate while standing.

Kuna īru (to bend knee). This too is only applicable to women who must bend or squat to urinate.

2.5 Positive Politeness

Positive politeness according to Brown and Levinson (1987) employs the consideration of social and cultural norms while also maintaining solidarity with the addressee. They further say that positive politeness is the positive image which the hearer claims for himself. The Kīīveti dialect speaker must therefore recognize the wants of the hearer to have his face wants recognized and respected. These face wants that the addressee wants the speaker to respect include solidarity and friendliness. The speaker therefore must act in restraint to avoid imposing on the hearer's freedom and space. Positive politeness or face also entails the hearer's desire to be approved of by others in interactions.

2.6 Death

Whereas the Aembu Kīīveti dialect speakers make use of negative politeness in most verbal interactions so as to save face according to Qadi (2009) and Brown and Levinson (1987), they elsewhere make use of positive politeness in some social instances to express solidarity with the addressee. Positive politeness expresses solidarity with the addressee on the side of the speaker. Brown and Levinson (1987) posited that positive politeness is often used to color reality or for the magnification of reality. In a study titled 'A Sociolinguistics

27

Comparison of Euphemisms in English and Arabic', Qadi (2009) concludes that English speakers as well as their Arabic counterparts used positive politeness to magnify realities and also to elevate one's social ratings in the estimation of the addressee.

Death is viewed differently in different cultures across the world. However, one feature that is almost universal is the euphemism employed when people talk about this natural phenomenon called death and the attending activities thereof. The Kīīveti dialect is no exception to this universally acknowledged truth. Qadi (2009) says that positive politeness is employed when considering the general social norms of the society as well as when expressing solidarity with the addressee. In talking about death, the Kīīveti dialect speakers use more inoffensive terms instead of 'gūkua' (to die) which is considered too offensive and therefore likely to threaten the face needs of the speaker. Polite expressions are used such as the following when referring to death instead of 'gūkua':

Gwītwa (to be called)

Gūtūtiga (to leave us)

Kūvurūka (to rest)

Kūthira (to end)

Kūthiī mbere (to go first)

Gūkinya thani (to step on the plate)

Gūcokia iratū (to return shoes)

Gūcokia rītwa (to return the name)

Kūthiī kūvanda mīanga (to go to plant cassava)

Kwīthitha (to hide)

Gūcokia īcembe (to return the jembe)

In line with making an offensive utterance or thing look less offensive according to Brown and Levinson (1987), the Kīīveti dialect speakers use euphemized expressions to refer to a dead body. The word 'kimba' (corpse) is considered offensive and therefore inappropriate and demeaning to the departed. Besides, if the word 'kimba' (corpse) is used, the respondents said that the speaker would be implying social distancing from the deceased as well as the addressee. This is contrary to the assertion by Brown and Levinson (1987) that positive politeness enhances solidarity between the speaker and the addressee. The Kīīveti dialect speaker therefore use more polite terms such as the following to refer to the dead: 'mwīri' (the dead body) and 'mūtīga irī' (one who has left)

This study too established that the Kīīveti dialect speakers do indeed make use of positive politeness in some social contexts. From the responses of the participants, the study established that Kīīveti dialect speakers use positive politeness to be in tandem with the societal and cultural norms of the Aembu people. For example, the Kīīveti dialect speakers call a grave 'mbīrīra' which is considered taboo. Just to magnify reality and color it so as to shoot emotions aroused by the mention of 'mbīrīra' (grave), the euphemism version 'nyomba ya kūvurūka' (house of rest) is used. This is a case of positive politeness as the speaker in this case aims at expressing solidarity with addressee by guarding against arousal of ill feelings. Equally, grave diggers whom could be referred to as 'enji mbīrīra' (grave diggers) are referred to using a more inoffensive term that elevates their social

standing as 'avarīria īrima' (ones who prepare the hole). This kind of politeness was seen to fall well in place with Lakoff's (1989) assertion that people communicate to build relationships and avoid conflicts. In referring to grave diggers as 'acimba īrima' (diggers of the hole)' the speaker elevates not only his social standing in the eyes of the addressee but also expresses solidarity with the said diggers by elevating and magnifying the work that they do.

The positive face or politeness is when a speaker makes an utterance which he believes is potentially less offensive by more fancy terms as in the case of burial rites among the Kĩĩveti speakers. In reference to burial, the Kĩĩveti speaker has the expression 'kũthika' (to bury) which is considered to be offensive. Therefore, through the use of different strategies such as circumlocution and metaphorical expressions, the Kĩĩveti speaker refers to burial as 'gūkinyia' (to escort) and 'kumagaria' (to escort). This is a case of positive politeness as reality of 'kūthika' (to bury) is magnified and colored so as to express solidarity with the addressee. In so doing, the Kĩĩveti speaker is cognizant of the addressee's desire to have his face needs respected and recognized.

2.7 Marriage and Circumcision

Another case of positive politeness was observed in the social context of initiation. During the interactions with the respondents, it came out clearly that among the Aembu, the act of initiation and the initiates had a lexicon which to the native speakers was considered taboo and as such other words were used to colour reality among the Kĩĩveti speakers to express solidarity with the initiates. The circumcision ceremony for instance is known as' kūrua' (to be circumcised). However, since this term was considered offensive, the Kĩĩveti speakers prefer to use the word 'kūgimara' (to be mature). The initiates could be referred

to us as 'irui' (initiates), which too is taken to be offensive and therefore, it is not to be mentioned in polite society. The terminology that is preferred by the Kĩĩveti dialect speaker is 'ciumĩri' (the ones ready for initiation). The uncircumcised among the Kĩĩveti speakers are often looked down upon and therefore, there were offensive terms that were used to refer to them. All the foregoing examples point to a case of positive politeness where reality is magnified as the speaker seeks to build or enhance solidarity with his addressee while on the other hand observing the societal norms and cultural traditions.

Indeed, all the human rites of passage among the Kĩĩveti speakers seem to be full of euphemisms- a fact attributable to the cultural norms and beliefs which form the basis upon which they are founded. The marriage rite of passage among the Kĩĩveti speaker was also riddled with euphemisms just like the other rites of passage. To marry for example is 'kũgũrana' (to buy each other). This was considered offensive since the Kĩĩveti speaker could not contemplate the idea of selling and buying one another! The words kũvikania' (to marry), 'kũgĩa andũ' (to get people) which are taken to be more polite, through the coloring of reality. The husband is to be called 'mũrũme, (that who bites or eats), but this too sounds offensive or impolite. The native speakers thus prefer to use 'mũvikania' (bridegroom). The wife is equally to be called 'mũka' (one who has come). This is considered offensive especially in the eyes of the gender equality crusaders who hold in low esteem the whole issue of dowry with its attendant innuendos of payment, buying and selling of women. The marrying woman is therefore euphemized as 'mũviki' (bride). After marriage, the husband is politely referred to as 'mũthuri' (one who organizes) and the wife is called 'mũtumia' (one who keeps secrets).

2.8 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the study has established that the Kĩĩveti speaker avoids the use of words that are considered taboo or too offensive to be uttered in polite society through different types of replacements. These replacements which the study deemed to be negative politeness are done by use of more acceptable words, use of jargon terms, use of metaphorical expressions, euphemisms and in some cases through circumlocutions.

It was further found out that in some social contexts such as when referring to some occupations which are viewed or perceived by the speakers as inferior like grave digging and cleaning, positive politeness is used to express solidarity with the hearer and to comply with the social and cultural norms and beliefs. Some things and events such as war, death, disagreements and illnesses are often magnified or colored by the Kĩĩveti speaker so as to achieve politeness through the magnification and coloring of reality. This was found to help the Kĩĩveti speaker elevate his social standing and self- esteem in the estimation of his addressee. Depending on whose face is being threatened, the Kĩĩveti speaker has the option of using either negative or positive politeness as was propounded by Brown and Levinson (1987).

CHAPTER THREE

THE ROLE OF EUPHEMISM IN COMMUNICATING MEANING

3.1 Introduction

Euphemism is found in every language across the world. It is used to mask profanity in language as constrained by the cultural code. In this chapter, this study investigates the role played by the euphemized lexical items in Kĩĩveti dialect in communicating meanings in different social contexts. These social contexts include sex, excretion, death, initiation as well as marriage among many others. These social contexts usually evoke strong emotions which euphemism often tries to mask and refer to them in a polite way. Indeed, the word euphemism traces its origin to Greek where it was used to mean to speak favorably or appropriately. Among the kĩĩveti speakers some subjects such as sex and death are not to be mentioned explicitly everywhere and by everybody. Sex for instance is to be discussed in private and adults who again have to consider their social- cultural norms and the kinship relation that obtains between them. Parents could not for instance, expressly discuss sexual matters with their children among the kĩĩveti speakers. This role was delegated to the aunts and grandparents who according to cultural norms and the society code could discuss the subject freely. However, people could always in at one time or another want to communicate such sensitive topics such as sex, death excretion and initiation. This is when euphemism comes in handy and in this chapter, the study looks at what role euphemism plays in communicating meaning in the Kĩĩveti dialect.

3.2. The Role of Euphemism in Communicating Meaning in Kĩĩveti

3.2.1 Euphemism to Develop Genuine Communication

Euphemism plays different roles in aiding communication and making it more effective. In any communication that takes place, people often try to convey some meanings. Some topics that are considered so emotive such as sex, death, marriage and initiation require the use of euphemism to effectively communicate the intended meaning. The first role played by euphemism among others is the role of developing genuine communication among interlocutors. In this case, euphemism masks profanity when referring to taboo subjects mentioned in the foregoing sentence. Lakoff (1973) says that whenever people communicate, they do so while obeying cultural norms with a view of being clear and polite. He argues that more often than not, speakers in a conversation strive to achieve both clarity and politeness. However, where this is not practically possible to achieve, politeness overrides the need for clarity. This means that people in a conversation would strive more to achieve genuine communication over clarity. Brown and Levinson (1987), hold that politeness is founded on the assumption of mutual cooperation among interlocutors. They posit that members cooperate so as to minimize conflict and enhance cooperation resulting in genuine communication.

Developing genuine communication among interlocutors is a pragmatic function of euphemism. A kĩĩveti speaker would also strive to achieve this pragmatic function of euphemism of developing genuine communication in different social contexts. This helps the hearer to better understand the meaning intended in a communication process. For instance, the word 'kũthicana' (to have sex) is taboo and it is never expressly mentioned in

polite company or in public. Whenever it is spoken publicly according to the respondents interviewed, it evokes strong emotions thereby becoming an FTA.

When a stimulus or any input becomes a Face Threatening Act in a communication process, then communication of the intended meaning is inhibited. It was established that to develop and achieve genuine communication among the kĩĩveti dialect interlocutors, euphemism comes handy especially in sensitive subjects such as this one. The kĩĩveti speaker would therefore use the euphemized counterparts of the taboo word 'kũthicana' (to have sex) to achieve genuine communication. The study established that expressions such as 'gwĩkana' (to do one another),

> Kũrũthana (to do one another)
>
> Kwĩgucana (to have a common understanding)
>
> Kũrora mwatũ (to check on the bee hive)
>
> Gũkũnya mbakĩ (to pinch tobacco)

Kũrĩcana (to eat one another) among many others are used to achieve genuine communication by blunting or toning down the effect of the taboo subject but at the same time communicating the intended meaning. This is achieved by considering the face wants of the hearer which according to Brown and Levinson (1987), are culturally constrained. The kĩĩveti dialect listener expects the speaker to recognize and respect his face wants through solidarity and friendliness in order to achieve genuine communication. kĩĩveti speakers understand and share this model amongst themselves as they keep exchanging roles.

Euphemism was also observed to play the role of developing genuine communication in other social contexts such excretion. The subject of body excretions is yet another subject that is often tabooed among the kĩĩveti speaker as mentioning of the processes of excretion and its products evokes strong feelings and reactions from the audience. For instance, to defecate in kĩĩveti dialect is 'kũmĩa', which is as the study established, is never mentioned as it is a face threatening act to both the speaker and the hearer. To achieve genuine communication where the hearer's face wants won't be threatened, the euphemized words such as 'gwĩtethia' (to help oneself),

Kĩoro kĩnene (long call)

Kuna mwĩgua (to cut a thorn)

Kũuna (to cut it)

Kavida (long call) are employed so as to develop genuine politeness.

3.2.2 The Role of Being Polite

The essence of euphemism is politeness. Scollon and Scollon (1997) define politeness as how languages express the social distance between people in a conversation interaction and the different role relationships that they play during the interaction. Politeness is conveyed in different ways both verbally as well as non- verbally. Consequently, Fraser (1990) proposed four different views of politeness.

The social- norm view which says that society has set social norms and standard which act as a yard stick for measuring politeness among its people. The face- saving view according to Fraser (1990) is another view which implies that participants in an interaction have

36

emotions and reputations to safeguard hence the need for politeness. The third view according to Fraser (1990) is the conversational maxim view which is founded upon Grice's communicative principles where participants in an interaction cooperate to achieve the conversation goals. The speaker strives to make his intentions understood whereas the listener tries as much as possible to decode the meanings encoded by the speaker.

Among the kĩĩveti dialect speakers, the desire for politeness is constrained by all the four views discussed by Fraser (1990). For instance, death, which is among the most emotive subjects calls for a very high sense of politeness whenever discussing it. The kĩĩveti speaker in the context of death avoids the use of the word 'gũkua' (to die) which the community social code considers taboo. The term 'gũkua' is offensive to both the diseased and the close relatives or the addressee. The kĩĩveti speaker would instead use the expressions considered less offensive to achieve politeness such as:

'gwĩtwa' (to be called),

'kũvurũka' (to rest),

'gũtũtiga' (to leave us),

'kũthiĩ mbere' (to go first/ ahead),

kũthira (to end),

gũcokia iratũ (to return shoes) and

gũcokia ĩcembe (to return the jembe).

In the same way, this study established that the kĩĩveti speaker does not use the word 'kimba' which is the equivalent of corpse in English. This word 'kimba' is impolite and evokes bad feelings among the natives. So as to mask the profanity that is brought about by the word 'kimba' (corpse), a kĩĩveti speaker would use euphemism to express solidarity with the addressee. Some of the words that this study got included 'mwĩrĩ' (the body of …) and 'mũtiga irĩ' (one who has left).

The study through the informants or respondents, established that during initiation ceremonies and celebrations, kĩĩveti speakers will try to be polite. The politeness is achieved by the use of euphemisms and shunning those lexical items which are tabooed. 'Kũrua' (to be circumcised) is a taboo word that refers to the initiates in a pejorative way. During these social interactions, it becomes imperative that the participants in these interactions observe politeness through the use of politer expressions such as 'kũgimara' (to be mature) which elevates the social standing of the addressee thereby establishing solidarity with the addressee and enhancing politeness. The initiates, it was established, are rarely referred to as 'irui' which is offensive and evokes feelings resentment on the side of the addressee. kĩĩveti speakers therefore prefer to use the words or expressions 'ciumĩri' (the ones ready for initiation).

Female circumcision was traditionally practiced among the Kĩĩveti speakers and the Aembu people as whole. However, this tradition has since been abandoned due to its health ramifications, the adoption of Christianity as a way of life and the enactment of laws that outlawed the practice.

The study found out that in virtually all social contexts, the desire to be polite is paramount in the minds of the kĩĩveti speaker. One way of achieving and maintaining politeness the study found, to be use of euphemisms. Euphemism therefore plays the role of being polite.

This in the kĩĩveti dialect was found to be achieved through the use metaphorical expressions for taboo words, borrowing from other languages, widening or broadening as well as semantic shift. The role of being polite was seen to be the predominant role among all the roles played by euphemism in the kĩĩveti dialect.

Another example of another social context where politeness is sought is in marriage. Marriage is such a valued institution that a lot of emphasis is laid on it by the societal norms and code of conduct. To marry in the kĩĩveti dialect is called 'kũgũrwa' which literally translates to 'be bought', which is quite offensive as it connotes a value attachment to a marriage partner. This, the study found that in most cases, is euphemized as 'kũvika' (to get married) which is politer as it implies a social relationship.

3.2.3. The Role of Avoiding Taboo

Taboo is one way in which society express its disapproval of certain kinds of behavior believed to be harmful or face threatening to its members or since such behavior goes against the society's moral code. Some things are not to be said, and certain objects are only to be referred in strictly guarded circumstances. Taboo in society is anchored in the social norm view as proposed by Fraser (1990). Fraser says that every society has a set of laws and regulations which act as its yard stick in deciding which thing or object is to be tabooed and which is not. When a child is born into a society according to Momanyi (2019), the society trains the child to function in that culture. The child then grows and functions

in the culture and when in the fullness of time, departs leaving back the culture. One of the inherent knowledge that children learn is how to evade profanity brought about by the utterance of taboo words and subjects. Euphemism provides the much desired opportunity for participants in an interaction for avoiding taboo.

Some body parts are not to be expressly referred to in public or in polite community in most African communities, kĩĩveti dialect speakers included. This is so because the social code of a society has tabooed the mention of some body parts especially the private parts and what they do. In kĩĩveti, the male reproductive organ, the penis is called 'mũthinũ' whereas testicles are called 'ntheke' both of which are taboo to mention. Children grow up knowing these words but also know that they are taboo words and therefore, their utterance is constrained or governed by societal moral codes that govern interaction between its members. So as to avoid taboo which is one of the roles of euphemism, the kĩĩveti speaker would refer to this reproductive body part as 'mũtĩ' (a tree/ stick). The same case applies to the female reproductive organ which in kĩĩveti is referred to as 'nvĩni' (vagina). This term is taboo and thus native speakers are cultured at very early ages never to mention it in public or in mixed society. A kĩĩveti speaker will instead, in order to avoid taboo, use the euphemisms 'nyamũ' (an animal) or 'ndumu/ mboco' (bean) to refer to the clitoris in the female reproductive organ. The buttocks, the study established that they among those body parts which are tabooed. Therefore, instead of calling them 'matina' (buttocks), kĩĩveti speaker prefer the words 'nthũnũ/ mbĩkarĩro- to mean buttocks and part to sit on respectively. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), euphemism helps people to avoid taboo words which would be offensive to mention in polite company.

Most social contexts are laden with euphemisms among the speakers of kĩĩveti dialect. Giving birth among the speakers of this dialect is considered to be among the subjects that are taboo to mention expressly. To give birth for instance is called 'gũciara' which is taboo. In order to avoid this taboo word, the speakers of kĩĩveti use the expressions:

kũgĩa mwana (to bear a baby),

kũvewa mwana (to be given a baby) or

kũrathimwa (to be gifted).

'Thigiri' (the placenta or afterbirth) is also taboo and cannot be mentioned because society norms classify it as a taboo. To avoid taboo, the speakers use its euphemism 'nyomba ya mwana' (house of the baby) which is a metaphor referring to the placenta, the target domain, as house of the child. The house is the source domain which is familiar and concrete to the participants in the interaction. Through a mapping process, the encyclopedic entries of the house are mapped onto the placenta through a mental mapping process.

3.2.4 The Role of Disguising

Euphemism in kĩĩveti dialect was also found to play the role of disguising reality. To this end, euphemism helps to beautify or magnify reality so as to express solidarity with the addressee and in the long run achieving politeness. In this role, euphemism numbs the addressee's instincts thereby achieving politeness. Qadi (2009) defines euphemism as sounding good; or words that sound nice or good. He reasons that euphemism is the substitution of those words that are deemed offensive with those considered less offensive in any one given society. Qadi (2009) gave the example of English speakers referring to the old people as 'senior citizens' instead of old people in order to disguise reality. He

argues that old people often found offence in the expression 'old people' and were comfortable with being called senior citizens.

Among the speakers of kĩĩveti dialect, the study established that euphemism is also used in some contexts to disguise reality which could be too offensive to say the way it is. In reference to death for instance, the word 'gũkua' meaning to die is rarely used. This is because death evokes feelings of sadness especially among the close relatives of the departed individual. Besides, death evokes fear among participants in an interaction since they too come to the realization that one day they will eventually die. It is also a way of showing respect to the departed soul by not referring to it directly. Thus the kĩĩveti speaker will disguise this hard reality of death by use euphemism. The study established that death therefore, as a result of the foregoing, is in most cases euphemized as:

'gwĩtwa' (to be called),

'kũthiĩ rũgendo' (to go on a journey)

'kũvurũka' (to rest) and

'kũthira' (to end) among many others.

The dead body or corpse is called 'kimba' in kĩĩveti dialect of Kĩembu language. However, the study found out that this word 'kimba' is never used in most cases since the participants like to disguise reality in order to sound polite or to achieve politeness. The preferred expression which serves the same purpose is 'mwĩrĩ' (the dead body) and 'mũtiga-irĩ' (one who has left or departed). This, the study established that it helps to blunt reality and the attendant emotions and brings about solidarity and achieves the much desired politeness

42

among the interlocutors. The burial process is 'kũthika'. It is disguised as 'gũkinyia' or 'kumagaria' both meaning to escort someone. This ties in well with the metaphor where death is 'gũtũtiga' (to leave us). When someone leaves, especially a guest, he has to be escorted to show courtesy. Further, this study established in this particular case that dead is euphemized as a journey that one takes. Euphemism then plays the role of disguising the harsh reality of death as a journey. When one embarks on a journey, expectations abound that he will come back soon or later. In the same way, when death is disguised as a journey, the loved ones left behind live with expectation that one day they will meet, at least according to the Christian teachings.

3.3 Chapter Summary

This chapter has investigated the role played by euphemism in kĩĩveti dialect in communicating meaning. The study determined that euphemized lexical items in kĩĩveti dialect play different roles in communicating meaning in a variety of social contexts. The study established that in the first place, euphemism in the kĩĩveti dialect of kĩembu language plays the role of developing genuine communication among the speakers of the dialect. The study determined that euphemism achieves this role developing genuine communication by masking profanity and referring to tabooed subjects in a politer way. Secondly, euphemism in kĩĩveti dialect plays the role of enabling participants in an interaction to be polite. The study established that according to Lakoff (1987) assertion that people communicate to be polite and establish relationships, kĩĩveti speakers too are constrained by the cultural code to observe politeness. To be able to achieve politeness, the speakers use euphemism in different ways including broadening and narrowing of meanings, borrowing in some instances and of course sematic shifts.

The study determined that euphemism also plays the role of avoiding taboo. Taboo was found to be one way in which society expresses its disapproval of certain kinds of behavior believed to be harmful to its members either by supernatural reasons or because it violates a moral code that has been established by the society. The study established that certain things or subjects in the kĩĩveti dialect that are not to be spoken or said in certain circumstances. The other role that euphemism plays among the speakers of kĩĩveti is that of disguising. The study established that this helps to beautify and magnify reality especially in those subjects or objects that evoke strong emotions.

The chapter wrapped up by discussing this role of disguising as was observed among the speakers of kĩĩveti dialect. According to Qadi (2009) this role of disguising helps to elevate one's social estimation in the society or among those he is interacting with.

CHAPTER FOUR

SOCIAL VALUES EXPRESSED IN POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE POLITENESS

4.1 Introduction

In the preceding chapter, the study discussed the role played by euphemized lexical items in communicating meaning in Kĩĩveti dialect in different social contexts. It was established that euphemism plays different roles in communicating meaning in Kĩĩveti dialect. In this chapter, the study will try to establish how social values are expressed in both positive and negative politeness in Kĩĩveti dialect. The chapter seeks to answer the question; how are social values expressed in both positive and negative politeness in Kĩĩveti dialect? Positive politeness refers to mutual understanding and inclusivity. Positive politeness is achieved through the compliments, encouragements, beautification or coloring of reality including lies. Positive politeness elevates one's social standing in society and enhances self- image. Negative politeness on the other hand entails respecting the privacy of the other people. This is usually achieved through respecting an individual's right to privacy, making of decisions, reservations and considering the feelings of others in a conversation.

Social values are a society's set of moral principles governed by cultural beliefs, dynamics and the society's institutions. Social values form a society's guidelines that help individuals or members of the society to behave properly. Values in a society ensure that there is peaceful coexistence and harmony as they set out what is wrong and what is right, what is allowed and what is not and so on. They act as the reference point for all interactions amongst members of a group. It is important to note that all members of a given society subscribe to social values agreed upon through convention. The social values are the basis upon which people's conduct is founded and help individuals to assess their interactions,

45

goals, ideas and feelings. Values are the glue that holds the society together and provide a standard for social interactions. Indeed, shared values give members of any one given society a sense of belonging.

4.2 Expression of Social Values in Positive Politeness

As was mentioned in the introduction part of this chapter, positive politeness refers to mutuality and inclusivity. It is founded upon the desire of participants in an interaction for mutual understanding and inclusion. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), positive politeness involves one's desire to be approved of by others in a social interaction. It is the positive image the hearer claims for himself. The speaker in an interaction must recognize the face wants of the hearer to have his face wants recognized and respected. One way in which social values are expressed in positive politeness is through solidarity with the hearer. Brown and Levinson (1987) say that positive politeness is achieved partly by expressing solidarity with the hearer. In this way, the social value of cooperation is expressed. Politeness is a set of conventions such as those that were proposed by Grice's cooperative principles. Positive politeness is expressed by satisfying positive face in two ways: through indicating similarities amongst interactants and expressing an appreciation of the interlocutor's self- image.

Positive face is the positive and consistent image people have of themselves and the desire to be approved of. Positive politeness uses strategies like emphasizing friendship so as to avoid offence. Interlocutors use speech acts that tend to be positive face want in nature of an individual such as offer of friendship, compliments, showing direct interest and so on. Among the Kĩĩveti dialect speakers, participants in an interaction are aware of these cultural demands and therefore, take the opportunities offered by language to express

politeness through offering friendship. In the social context of circumcision that often attracts whole villages to participate, there is always an element of friendship expressed through the euphemisms employed in that context. To be circumcised in Kĩĩveti dialect is 'kũrua' (to be circumcised) which the speakers consider offensive and taboo. However, so as to express friendship and solidarity with the addressee, the expression 'kũgimara' is often employed which means to mature. The social standing of the initiates is elevated by using the expression 'kũgimara' (to mature) which means more than just the single act of circumcision. To mature comes with responsibilities and respect which are social values wrapped up with the expression 'kũgimara' (to mature). When addressed as 'kũgimara (to be mature), the positive image of the hearer which he claims for himself according to Brown and Levinson (1987) is recognized by the speaker. Brown and Levinson (1987) argue that the speaker must recognize the face wants of the hearer.

The initiates as it were, have a positive image which they claim for themselves and according to Brown and Levinson (1987), the speaker must recognize the wants of the addressee and the desire to have them respected. In Kĩĩveti dialect for instance, initiates are referred to as 'irui' which is offensive and as such a Kĩĩveti speaker addressing initiates will address them as 'ciumiri' (the ones ready for initiation). Through the circumlocution exhibited in this expression, the Kĩĩveti speaker is expressing the social values of friendship and solidarity with the addressees- the initiates. An uncircumcised boy is called 'kavisi' or 'kivisi' which the native speakers of Kĩĩveti dialect consider quite offensive and derogatory.

However, in cognizant of the social norms and values that govern communication and other social interactions among the Kĩĩveti speakers, a speaker addressing uncircumcised young boys would instead refer to them as 'kamwana or kĩmwana' meaning a small boy or a big boy respectively. In safeguarding the positive face wants of the addressee, the uncircumcised boys in this context, the speaker magnifies reality. Thus through the magnification of reality, the speaker expresses the social value of friendship which elevates the self- esteem of the addressees. As was mentioned elsewhere in this study, the Aembu people practiced both male and female circumcision. The uncircumcised girls were called 'irĩgũ' which according to the informants and my own intuitions of the culture, is very offensive. Participants in an interaction where the hearer is a young uncircumcised girl exercises caution and courtesy when addressing them so as not to violate the positive face wants which also includes the desire to be approved by others.

Modesty, which is a sense of priority or concern for others, is one way in which politeness is expressed in Kĩĩveti dialect. A Kĩĩveti speaker shows a lot of sensitivity to what others say. Interlocutors have to carefully choose their words because so as not to hurt the feelings or face wants of the hearer. In positive politeness, according to Brown and Levinson (1987), participants in an interaction use speech acts that enhance positive face wants that include solidarity, friendship and compliments. Death is one subject that arouses strong feelings and emotions among participants in an interaction in most societies. It is one of those social contexts that call for politeness among interlocutors. A Kĩĩveti speaker has always a sense of concern for the addressee as a result of cultural upbringing which emphasizes modesty at all times. To die in Kĩĩveti dialect is 'gũkua' which is offensive and rouses feelings and emotions. It is considered to be demeaning to the departed soul as most

African communities believe in life after death. 'gũkua', denotes an end to life which is against the belief of life after death. A Kĩĩveti speaker must therefore express politeness through modesty and concern for the feelings of the close relatives of the departed person and the addressee. In reference to death, the speaker therefore uses expressions such as;

kũvurũka (to rest),

Gũtũtiga (to leave us),

Kũthiĩ mbere (to go first)

Kũthira (to end)

Gũkinya thani (to step on the plate)

Gũcokia iratũ to return the shoes)

gũcokia ritwa (to return the name) and many other expressions.

The euphemized expressions above show consideration for the feelings of the addressee and the departed individual. 'kũvurũka' (to rest) blunts the effects of death by assuring the addressee that, the deceased is only resting. Death in this case is referred to metaphorically as 'rest'. The source domain rest is familiar to the addressee. Some of the encyclopedic entries for rest include; taking a break after work, it is temporary, it is necessary for good health and so on. The target domain death is likened to taking a break after a long toil in life and that it is inevitable. In this way, Kĩĩveti speakers in an interaction are able to express social values as stipulated by the social norms and cultural standards of the society. The principle of self- own face respect and difference to others' face wants is achieved.

Fraser (1990) says that social norms or values are to be obeyed whenever communication is taking place. In positive politeness the values are expressed through the magnification of reality. This is done to elevate one's social standing and self- esteem in the eyes of the addressee. To marry in Kĩĩveti dialect is 'kũgũrana' meaning to buy one another which is offensive and quite debasing. It is offensive because a human being cannot be bought like an animal especially in this century. The expression 'kũgũrana' is thus avoided and expressions 'kũgia andũ' meaning 'to get people' and 'kũgia mũndũ' meaning to get a person are often employed. By using these expressions, social values of respect and consideration for other people's feelings are expressed through the magnification of reality. The study found out that when referring to a woman who is getting married, a Kĩĩveti speaker can use the expression 'kũgũrwa' which means to be bought. This is quite offensive and degrading especially to the woman as it lowers her status to that of an animal. The study established that the expression is culturally conditioned since women were given in marriage in exchange for bride price. This phenomenon is magnified through the use of euphemisms such as 'kũgĩa mwene' (to get owner) and 'kũgĩa mũndũ' (to get a person) which mean to get an owner and to get a person respectively. Through the magnification of reality, social value of self- positive image on the part of the addressee and consideration for other peoples' feelings on the side of the speaker are expressed.

4.3. Expression of Social Values in Negative Politeness

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), negative politeness is the hearer's desire for freedom. It is the desire not to be imposed on by the speaker who is required in this case to recognize the addressee's need for autonomy. It is important therefore for the speaker to try as much as possible to restrain himself during a social interaction from imposing on the

hearer's freedom. According to Qadi (2009), the speaker achieves this by avoiding or erasing altogether, those linguistic expressions that the society deems pejorative. This means that any act that may be detrimental to the hearer's self- image is a face threatening act (FTA) and thus must be avoided or erased to mitigate the damage to the face wants of the hearer. Negative politeness is usually used to avert face loss in an interaction. This is achieved through erasing all things and utterances that are not comfortable to deal with directly by replacing them with others that are considered friendly. The more friendly expressions are got through the use of metaphorical expressions, circumlocutions, magnification of reality as well as exaggerations. However, negative politeness employs the avoidance of those expressions and subjects deemed offensive and replacing them with more comfortable ones through the use of euphemism.

Brown and Levinson (1987), claim that human communication is an essential part of the linguistic competencies that one acquires. Politeness is also an essential component of human communication without which, communication may not meaningfully take place. Politeness entails the face desires of an individual's personal liberties and freedom to action. Brown and Levinson (1987) say that negative politeness deflates and diminishes the effects of offensive and taboo words to the hearer's face wants. This is done with the social norms and cultural demands that govern communication and other social interactions coming into play. Through avoidance and by erasing some lexical items and subjects that are deemed taboo and offensive, social values are expressed and upheld in a social interaction.

Qadi (2009) posits that euphemism is the substitution of those lexical items and things that are considered by native speakers to be offensive and taboo with those that are considered to be less offensive in the eyes of the societal norms and standards. This study holds that Qadi (2009) is referring to negative politeness where avoidance and erasing (substitution) of some lexical items that are considered to be offensive and taboo with euphemisms that are less offensive.

Among the Kĩĩveti dialect speakers, social values are expressed by avoidance and erasing of the lexical items and subjects as well as things that are considered to be offensive and taboo with those that are less offensive. This was observed in the social context or domain of pregnancy and birth among the Kĩĩveti dialect speakers where some lexical items and expressions are considered to be too offensive and therefore taboo. To become pregnant for example is known as 'gwĩkĩrwa ĩvu' (which is offensive and taboo). The native speakers of the dialect avoid the use of the expression 'gwĩkĩrwa ĩvu' (to become pregnant) and instead use euphemisms such as 'kũgwatia' (to conceive) and 'kũgĩa ĩvu'' (to catch pregnancy) which are considered less offensive. By avoiding or erasing the taboo and offensive expression 'gwĩkĩrwa ĩvu' the Kĩĩveti dialect speaker expresses social values and also recognizes the face wants of the addressee. The speaker also saves his own face which could be threatened if the bald on record strategy were to be employed.

'Gũciara' (to give birth) in Kĩĩveti is an expression that is taken to be very offensive and as such, it is avoided as a way of expressing social values of the community. The expression 'gũciara' is never to be mentioned in polite society. The euphemisms 'kũgĩa mwana' (to bear a child), 'kũvewa mwana' (to be given a baby), 'gũtetheka' (to be helped or aided) and 'kũrathimwa' (to be gifted) are instead used to convey the intended meaning and

52

express social values. The study found out that this is in line with the Brown and Levinson (1987)'s assertion that the speaker must act in restraint to avoid imposing on the hearer's autonomy and face wants. The hearer has the desire not to be imposed on and the speaker in Kĩĩveti dialect is cognizant of this desire of his addressee and that is why, the study established, the offensive expression 'gũciara' (to give birth) is never used. The same case was found to apply when referring to the after birth which in Kĩĩveti dialect is called 'thigiri' (placenta). The word, according to the participants of the study is considered very offensive and is to be avoided so as to safeguard the social values. The placenta in Kĩĩveti dialect is referred to as 'nyomba ya mwana' which translates to 'house of the child'. Lakoff (1973) says that whenever people have a conversation, they have to obey some cultural norms that define and govern politeness in the community where the participants in an interaction come from. A Kĩĩveti dialect speaker is well aware of this societal demand and observes it in all social interactions.

Politeness is achieved when the face wants of both the speaker and the addressee are safeguarded. Politeness is a social value that is highly priced in most communities across the world and as Lakoff (1973) points out, people communicate to establish friendship and build relationships amongst themselves. Brown and Levinson (1987), claim that politeness is grounded on the assumption of mutual cooperation between the participants of an interaction as they keep exchanging roles of encoder and decoder respectively. Among the Kĩĩveti dialect speakers, 'kũmĩa' means to defecate. This expression is taken to be offensive and thus is avoided when talking about the subject of excretion. The speaker avoids using the expression 'kũmia' to navigate the face threatening acts (FTA) to the addressee. The euphemism 'gwĩtethia' (to help oneself), kĩoro kĩnene (long call), 'kuna mwĩgua' (to cut a

53

thorn), 'kũuna' (to cut it), 'kavida' (long call/ short call) and 'kĩoro' (long call) are used to convey the intended meaning thereby maintaining the social values as laid down by the society norms and standards. 'Kumaga' is an expression that refers to the act of urinating and is considered to be offensive. The respondents informed the study that this expression is avoided when in polite society and instead, the euphemisms 'kũmatua' (to spit), 'gũtua mata' (to spit) and 'kũrũgama' (to stand) are used especially for men as they are the only ones able to urinate while standing upright. For women, the euphemism 'kuna ĩru' (to bend a knee) is often used as women have to bend or squat when performing the biological function of passing urine.

Social values were also found to be expressed through the use of metaphor. Kũrũgama (to stand) which is a euphemism for 'kumaga' (to urinate) is metaphorical. To stand is the source domain which is more familiar to the Kĩĩveti dialect speaker. The encyclopedic entries about 'standing' are mapped onto the act of urinating among the male members of the Kĩĩveti dialect. Urinating is the target domain which is considered offensive according to the Kĩĩveti norms and culture and therefore has to be avoided and its counterpart euphemism to stand used which meets the society's moral values and societal expectations. In the same way, 'kuna ĩru' (to bend a knee) is a metaphorical expression that is used to blunt the offensive effects of the expression 'kumaga' (to urinate). Through a mental mapping process of the qualities or encyclopedic entries of the source domain, 'kuna ĩru', to the target domain of 'kumaga' the Kĩĩveti dialect speaker evades the offensive or taboo expression thereby upholding the social values of the society. In this way, social values are expressed by disguising the reality 'kumaga' which is offensive with the less offensive expressions 'kuna ĩru' (to bend knee) and 'kũmatua' (to spit).

4.4. Chapter Summary

This chapter set out to discuss how social values are expressed in both positive and negative politeness in the Kĩĩveti dialect in different social contexts. The chapter began by exploring the meaning of social values and the role the values play in creating harmonious co-existence among members of a community. The social values are agreed upon by convention and all members of a society must abide by them. The chapter established that social values are expressed differently in positive politeness and negative politeness in different social settings among the Kĩĩveti dialect speakers. In positive politeness, the study found out that social values are expressed through different ways including expressing solidarity and friendship with the addressee and through the magnification of reality. Through the expression of solidarity and magnification of reality, the study established that mutual cooperation between participants in an interaction is enhanced and conflict is minimized as the face wants of each one of them is taken care of.

In negative politeness, the study established that social values are expressed in different social contexts among the Kĩĩveti dialect speakers in different ways. The most dominant way of expressing social values in negative politeness is by avoidance of lexical items and expressions that are deemed offensive and taboo and replacing them with those that are considered inoffensive in the culture. Negative politeness entails the addressee's desire not to be imposed upon by the speaker. Metaphor and metaphorical expressions were also found to be one of the ways in which social values are expressed in Kĩĩveti dialect, especially in negative politeness.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter comprises of a summary of the main findings of the study. Besides, the chapter will present the conclusions and recommendations for further studies. The study set out to find out the kind of politeness employed in Kĩĩveti dialect in different social contexts, to establish the role played by the euphemized lexical items in Kĩĩveti dialect in communicating meaning in different social contexts as well as establishing how social values are expressed in both positive politeness and negative politeness in Kĩĩveti dialect in different social contexts. These were the three main objectives that guided the study throughout the past four chapters. Chapter two dealt with the type of politeness employed in euphemized Kĩĩveti lexical items in different social contexts. Chapter three sought to establish the role played by the euphemized Kĩĩveti lexical items in communicating meanings in different social contexts, whereas in chapter four, the study sought to establish how social values are expressed in both positive and negative politeness in different social contexts. The study carried out these investigations using the politeness theory of Brown and Levinson (1987).

5.2 Conclusions

The study had set out to identify the type of politeness employed in the euphemized lexical items in Kĩĩveti dialect in different social contexts in chapter two. Brown and Levinson (1987) say that politeness is a way of avoiding face threatening acts which may be detrimental to hearer. The two posited two types of politeness according to the face wants and whose face is being threatened. These two types of politeness they posited are positive

and negative politeness. They said that positive politeness entails the desire by a participant in an interaction to be approved of by others whereas the negative politeness entails the desire by a participant in an interaction not to be imposed on or be impeded in his actions. The study had sought out to identify the type of politeness between positive and negative politeness is used in Kĩĩveti dialect to express politeness. It was established that the Kĩĩveti dialect speaker avoids the use of lexical items considered to be taboo and offensive through different types of replacements. Negative politeness is also achieved through erasing or avoiding some utterances or things that are not very comfortable to deal with directly.

The study through the participants in the study and review of literature, established that Kĩĩveti dialect speakers use both types of politeness depending on the social context at hand. It was established that in some social contexts such as when referring to some occupations which are deemed as rather inferior, positive politeness is used to express solidarity with the addressee. The study established that there is a demand by the social norms and culture that require people to do so. The use of fancy words and names was observed among the Kĩĩveti speakers. For example, in the death domain and other related ceremonies, the Kĩĩveti speaker used positive politeness to express solidarity with the addressee a who as well could be the bereaved family members and relatives. The study established that the Kĩĩveti speakers use positive politeness to make utterances and other things they believed to be potentially offensive by replacing them with euphemisms which are socially less offensive.

In some social contexts, the study established that the Kĩĩveti dialect speakers used negative politeness. This entailed the avoidance and erasing of some lexical items, expressions and objects that the society's cultural norms deemed offensive or taboo. The study established

that the speakers of Kĩĩveti dialect widely employed the use of negative politeness to avert face loss. This was achieved by the speakers through the erasing and avoiding of those expressions that participants in an interaction considered to be too taboo and offensive to be mentioned in polite society. The study established further that the taboo words and expressions exist in the language though the speakers rarely used them in their day to day communication to evade the negative loss which is the desire for the addressee's claim to personal territories, liberties, freedom to action and so on. Some of the social contexts where the Kĩĩveti dialect speaker was seen to use negative politeness is in the domains of pregnancy, birth, sex and conception. In all these social contexts, the Kĩĩveti speakers were found to employ the use of euphemisms and avoided the offensive and taboo expressions completely hence the conclusion that this was a case of negative politeness .Based on the findings discussed in the foregoing paragraphs pertaining the type of politeness employed in the euphemized lexical items in Kĩĩveti dialect in different social contexts, the study concludes that a Kĩĩveti dialect speaker employs the use of both positive and negative politeness as was propounded by Brown and Levinson (1987).

In chapter three, the study sought to determine the role played by the euphemized lexical items in Kĩĩveti dialect in communicating meanings between interlocutors in different social contexts. The study found out that euphemized Kĩĩveti lexical items may be used to mask profanity by referring to taboo subjects and words differently using euphemism. The study found out that euphemized Kĩĩveti lexical items played a host of roles among them, the role of developing genuine communication, the role of gloss over, the role of avoiding taboo and also the role of disguising truth. The study therefore concluded that euphemism, which is a derivation from a Greek word meaning speaking favorably, has a role to play in

enhancing communication between interlocutors. Lakoff (1973) observed that people communicated for two reasons which are clarity and politeness. Euphemism among the Kĩĩveti dialect speakers was found to help the participants in a communication situation to achieve politeness and thereby improving relationships.

The other area of concern of this study was the object of establishing how social values are expressed in both positive and negative politeness in Kĩĩveti dialect of Kiembu language. The study found out that social values are a set of conventionally agreed upon principles that help individuals in a particular society to behave properly in that society. They are part of the suggested guidelines that a society develops over a period of time through convention and through interaction with one another in the society. The values are the form the basis upon which the societal fabric is cast and without which, a state of anarchy would reign supreme. Chapter four of this study established that social values are expressed differently in positive politeness and negative politeness.

 In positive politeness, the study established that social values are expressed through circumlocutions, metaphorical expressions, telling of lies and exaggerations as well as by magnification of the truth. This is done to express solidarity with the addressee and also preserve the positive image which the hearer claims for himself or herself. A Kĩĩveti dialect speaker expressed social values in this way in cognition of the addressee's desire to have his face wants recognized and respected. Some of the face wants that the Kĩĩveti dialect speaker wants recognized and respected include the desire for solidarity and friendship. In negative politeness, the study found out that social values are expressed through erasing and avoiding or evading the taboo words and those subjects that are considered to be offensive. To some extent, metaphorical expressions were also found to be widely used by

the Kĩĩveti dialect speakers to express social values in negative politeness in different social contexts.

5.3 Recommendations of the Study

In spite of the constraints of this study, it is felt that it can form the foundation upon which future studies can be anchored in related areas. Among other things, the study established that euphemism plays a great role in communicating meaning among interlocutors. The study also established that social values are expressed in a variety of ways in both positive and negative politeness. Owing to these very important findings of this study, it is recommended that further research be carried on the same subject especially using the CDA theoretic frame work which has superior tools to handle much more intricate aspects of the whole topic of politeness and euphemism in Kĩĩveti dialect as well as other sister dialects of the larger Kĩembu language.

REFERENCES

Al- TyayibUmari, A. M. (2006). The Speech Act of Complaint as realized by Sudanese Learners of English. *Journal of Educational & Social Sciences & Humanities*, 18 (2), 9- 40.

Brown, P., & Levinson, S. (1987). *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Fraser, B. (1990). Perspectives on Politeness. *Journal of Pragmatics*. 14, 219-236.

Guthrie, P. (1967). *Classification of Bantu Languages*. London. Oxford University Press.

Grice, P. (1975). Logic and Conversation. In P. Cole, & J. Morgan (Eds.) *Studies in Syntax and Semantics 111: Speech Acts* (Pp.183-98).

Hymes, D. (1972). "On Communicative Competence". In J. B. Pride & J. Holmes (Eds.) *Sociolinguistics. Hamondsworth*, UK: Penguin Books.

Lakoff, R. (1973). *The Logic of Politeness: Or Minding Your P's and Q's*. Paper from the 9th Regional Meeting of the Chicago Linguistics Society, Pp. 292- 305.

Leech, G.N. (2005). Politeness: Is there an East- West Divide? *Journal of Foreign Languages*, 6, 2-36.

Mboya, M. (2002). Linguistics Taboo in African Marriage Context: A Study of the Oromo Language. *Nordic Journal of African Studies*, 2(2) 224-235.

Momanyi, E. M. (2019). A Cognitive Analysis of Ekegusii Riddles. Unpublished MA Thesis, University of Nairobi.

Qadi- Al Nasser, S. (2009). *A Sociolinguistics Comparison of Euphemisms in English and Arabic*. Taibah University, Al- Munuwarah. Saudi Arabia.

Scollon, R. & Scollon, S. W. (1995). *Intercultural Communication: A Discourse Approach.* Oxford: Blackwell.

Watts, R. J. (2003). *Politeness.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Yule, G. (1996). *Pragmatics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.